A Synopsis of *Remembering John Hanson*

This synopsis consists of a compendium of the six articles by Peter H. Michael on John Hanson which appeared monthly in Frederick, Maryland's *Frederick News-Post* from October 2011 through March 2012. The synopsis comprises five thousand words and about three percent of Michael's biography, *Remembering John Hanson* from which the articles were drawn, and covers the most important junctures of John Hanson's life and tragic fate.

Frederick's John Hanson served as the first president of the original United States government chartered by the Articles of Confederation in 1781, and twice before that played the key role at critical junctures in holding the thirteen states together in a unified nation. His two nation-saving strokes and his adroit marshalling of materiel, troops and financing during the Revolutionary War made him the choice by some of the greatest Americans who ever lived as their nation's first president.

Peter Michael's definitive Hanson biography is the first in over seventy years. A relative of John Hanson, he serves as president of the John Hanson Memorial Association and as publisher of *Underground Railroad Free Press* which published *Remembering John Hanson*. He is the seventh generation of the Michael family at Cooling Springs Farm, an Underground Railroad historic site, where he lives near Adamstown, Maryland.

John Hanson: Indispensible National Founder

Appeared in the *Frederick News-Post* October 23, 2011

When they laid him to rest in 1783, he was sorely mourned by Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Hancock and other American icons of his day, and the entire new breed he had helped bring into being, his countrymen now known the world over as Americans. Only the previous year he had been their president and he was their first former president to die.

Not long before, his fledgling nation had teetered on history's edge, its precariousness no match for its soaring ideals. Its starving army fought the mightiest on Earth. Revolutionary patriots were hunted down and executed. War funding was voluntary, sporadic and sparse. The United States were still plural, remaining independent sovereign states in nearly every respect, united in name and spirit only. The Second Continental Congress was weak, impoverished, poorly attended and no substitute for a government. Ratification of the Articles of Confederation to form the first government was held off in state after state for parochial interests, stalling nationhood in its tracks. No, in the years leading to his presidency, the grand American experiment faced the plausible prospects of a brief sickly life and collapse.

Even today, what followed seems miraculous. Not only were certain states convinced to subordinate their advantages for the sake of nationhood but, following the Declaration of Independence, the nation's first government was put forth in yet another ringing American document, the Articles of Confederation. But as the era played out, these crucial steps could happen only if fortune produced a transformational figure possessing the personal power to gather up and articulate the aspirations of his countrymen into a vision which would rise above dispute and to which all would subscribe.

Such a man, if he existed, would be the new nation's best, perhaps only, chance to bring forth its first breath. The esteemed Washington, leader of the heroic rag-tag army, eventually to claim the mantle of father of his country, did not step forward. The brilliant Jefferson, he of the incandescent prose of the nation's founding declaration, demurred. The polymath Franklin, perhaps brightest of them all, chose sage mentorship. Not Adams, nor Hancock, nor Hamilton, nor any other but one did the Founders summon to take on the challenge.

In 1781, a most timely providence called forth an American who by personal example gave his countrymen a heroic vision of what their nation might become, who gathered the blazing light

of their aspirations into his prism and directed it to his and his country's ends, who imprinted his will and vision on his people and had them cherish it, who possessed the personal power to bring his country to life after its bloody birth, without diluting its visionary ideals.

As would no other American president, the new American leader would have to fashion a government from whole cloth, his country's first. This man, if he existed, would need such compelling character as could kindle from the embers of his countrymen's hopes the fire of a people transformed, a beacon of liberty and reason new to the world, charging them with his vision and beckoning others to its promise.

From Maryland, there was such a man and in 1781 the stage was his. He had attained colony-wide political power in Frederick, a roiling frontier where a raw electorate resonated with his ideas of nationhood. He had become a key Revolutionary War financier, militia raiser and arms agent. When Maryland alone demurred on declaring independence with the other colonies, he, with sheer persuasive force and at the last hour, had wheeled Maryland around into making the union whole. He had lost two sons to the war. He, when all others had failed, persuaded states with large trans-Appalachian land grants to cede them to the new nation assuring political parity among the states. Only this nation-saving plan that bore his name permitted the thirteen independent nation-states then to unite.

In the months after ratification of the Articles of Confederation chartering the first government, there was intense assessment of candidates to become the nation's first president that fall. On November 5, 1781, the new government's delegates, including the American icons mentioned, best of the best the nation had to offer, knew at that golden hour that they must choose the very best among them to head the government, he least likely to fail. In the all-important convening in Independence Hall that morning, when the last star finally aligned for the actual birth of the United States, all eyes fell on Maryland's John Hanson who was elected unanimously.

When they laid him to rest two years later and the nation he had done so much to usher onto the world stage grieved the loss of its first president, little could his countrymen anticipate that even his burial place would become forgotten, the astounding climax to a tragic historical obliteration of an indispensible and sterling American performance.

This series tells the story of the most forgotten major figure in American history.

Greener Political Pastures: To the Frontier as Revolution Beckons

Appeared November 27, 2011

By 1723 Maryland's British Proprietor had begun selling large tracts of the future Frederick County where by the 1740s the swell of population required surer administration leading to the chartering of Frederick County in 1748.

By 1755 Frederick County was Maryland's most populous and in the decade before the Revolutionary War grew by 117 percent, a rate not remotely approached by any other Maryland county. This growth shifted the balance of population from the Chesapeake Bay's shores toward western Maryland causing realignment in the provincial House of Delegates.

Another shift was also taking place. From the first European settlement in 1631, the colony's power center had been heavily concentrated among the large old tobacco plantations lined up along the Chesapeake but now the burgeoning Frederick County was rapidly becoming Maryland's land of political opportunity.

By 1769 the county existed in stark contrast to the rest of Maryland: huge versus the much smaller older counties, rapidly growing versus nearly stable, new outlook versus old, experimental versus settled traditions, anti- versus pro-slavery, affordable versus expensive, multiethnic versus essentially monocultural, and fertile versus depleted soils from tobacco cultivation elsewhere. The vast western third of the colony comprising Frederick County offered greatest financial and social

opportunity not only for the settler but for established gentry such as John Hanson looking for new prospects.

Son of a judge, grandson of a wealthy immigrant, John Hanson grew up very comfortably in southern Maryland amidst the ruling patrician plantation class enjoying the privileges accruing to well-positioned British loyalists. But deep into comfortable mid-life, Hanson's aspirations for colonial independence quickened and in the 1760s he began pressing his views on his riverine neighbor George Washington and others. In Mount Vernon's visitor records, Hanson's name appears often.

John Hanson felt increasingly distanced from many of his own class, relatives and friends because of widening divergence between his and their views on independence. After Frederick County became first entity in any colony to officially oppose Britain's onerous Stamp Act in 1765, Hanson visited to test the waters and liked what he saw.

In fall 1769 Hanson gained the Proprietor's appointment as the county's Deputy Surveyor, a seemingly inadequate position for the senior statesman but actually one of Maryland's best compensated, most prized offices. The appointment afforded Hanson an excellent political toehold, acquainted him with the sprawling county's power brokers, and allowed him rapid, well informed property investments.

Most crucially, Hanson understood that to maximize his political effectiveness he needed to occupy an executive as opposed to legislative role. That left it to him to identify the executive position in the colony which offered highest personal power and best vantage from which to exercise his political will and aspirations for American independence. Easily the most fertile political territory for Hanson was the colony's huge independent-minded western reach, Frederick County which had been organized barely two decades before.

Previous biographers have labored to explain why Hanson uprooted himself from contented life at Mulberry Grove and relocated to what was then a roiling frontier. Oral tradition and other evidence make his reason clear: after Frederick County's official defiance of the Stamp Act displayed the county's temperament, John Hanson moved to Frederick for the clear-cut prospect of greener political pastures.

In exchanging his non-executive position as Charles County legislator for his chief executive position running the colony's largest, most populous, fastest growing, most rebellious county, John Hanson vastly increased his political base, vaulting him from just another strident powerless voice against British oppression to a force to be reckoned with colony-wide.

In the fall of 1769 at age 54, late in life for his era, John Hanson gave up his easy plantation life at Mulberry Grove with its grand long views overlooking the Potomac and Port Tobacco Rivers and moved his family to Frederick as ferment rose in the colonies and the Revolutionary War beckoned. Hanson would make his home in Frederick for 14 years until his death, his wife Jane for 33 until hers.

Hanson's political motivation in moving paid off entirely as Frederick County elected him to every office he ever sought from 1774 to the end of his life. The county, mostly still rough-hewn frontiersmen and new European immigrants, resonated with Hanson's political vision and quickly elected the newcomer to the county's highest executive position and simultaneously to the colonial, and then state, legislature in Annapolis.

From Frederick, Hanson raised the earliest Revolutionary War militias, became a key war financier, pressed the proposal for nationhood adopted by the Maryland Assembly and was launched into national politics.

Now an openly proclaimed rebel with a price on his head, Hanson's lucrative British appointments were replaced by his uncompensated position of Chairman of a breakaway county.

From establishmentarian to outlaw, well-compensated to unpaid, secure to threatened with the noose, John Hanson had now wholly put life, family and fortune at stake for his new nation's self-determination.

The Unifier: Hanson Twice Keeps the Nation Whole

Appeared December 25, 2011

As the Second Continental Congress debated independence in Philadelphia in late June 1776, Maryland remained saddled with doubts causing widespread concern that nationhood might not be unanimous. With the clock winding down, an annoyed John Adams wrote Maryland's Samuel Chase, "Maryland now stands alone. I presume she will soon join company; if not, she must be left alone." Exasperated, the Congress began considering a checkerboard union with drastically lessened national prospects, but pro-unification delegates held fast for unanimity.

With a rising tide elsewhere urging unity, John Hanson again took the lead in Maryland as he had in raising militias and war materiel. Persuading the Freemen of Frederick, Hanson on June 21 presented their resolution urging independence to the Maryland Convention, forcefully weighing in with its delegates to reverse Maryland's 1775 position opposing independence, a feat until then thought impossible.

Hanson and the politically rambunctious Frederick County had taken the lead in bringing Maryland in. A strident early mover for independence, his gaining Maryland's consent now made him heard beyond his colony's borders. While others had also influenced their assemblies on independence, they hadn't had to fashion an eleventh-hour pivot of national destiny as Hanson had.

Hanson's remonstrance concluded with the lasting words: "These resolutions ought to be passed and it is high time," which his biographers have reckoned as the Convention's turning point. In his return letter, Delegate Samuel Chase urged Adams, "Be assured that Frederick speaks the sense of many counties," and on June 28 the Maryland Convention ratified Hanson's proposal.

The same day, Thomas Jefferson presented his draft of the Declaration of Independence to the Second Continental Congress which could only hope that positive word would yet arrive from Maryland. By July 1 Congress president John Hancock, still lacking unanimity, adjourned the body giving the delegates the evening for deliberation. By morning, all colonies were in but Maryland and the Congress was prepared to declare independence without her. Reaching Congress late that day, Maryland's consent made adoption unanimous when the vote was taken and again on July 4.

Still indispensible in his war roles in materiel, funding and militia raising, John Hanson wouldn't make his appearance at the Congress for another four years. When he did, he put forth yet another Hanson Plan which would again hold the hopeful union together. His two nation-saving strokes would make him his country's first president.

What the Congress accepted on July 2 was independence itself and on July 4 several wording changes. State ratifications were gathered through August 2 when the nation actually came into being in name and spirit though without a government for another five years when the United States could finally consummate nationhood.

Back in Frederick, Hanson must have taken special contentment that ratification had been unanimous, Maryland was not odd-man-out, and he as much as anyone anywhere had ensured national wholeness.

Even before the Declaration of Independence was ratified, the Congress began work on chartering a government to complete nationhood. In November 1777, the Congress adopted the nation's original constitution, the Articles of Confederation, sending it to the states for ratification, but Maryland had put forth its ultimatum that states with western lands must cede them to the

forthcoming central government for its sole disposition into new states.

And there the Articles stalled for the next three years. Having put Congress on notice that Maryland would not ratify unless the western lands conundrum could be resolved, by 1780 the Articles lacked only Maryland's agreement.

In colonial times, British kings had granted seven colonies large trans-Appalachian land grants, in three cases extending to the Pacific Ocean. The six hemmed-in states without western territories feared future population growth of the seven and their eventual overpowering national electoral advantage. Hanson saw the western lands rift for the unsustainable peril that it was, a fatal disparity that with time could only fester into worse division.

Only Maryland's assent was needed to complete confederation, the lone holdout now roundly criticized and the western lands a full-blown nation-breaking standoff.

Seeing the prospect of unity slipping away in late 1779, John Hanson, in the bridge-building manner noted by all of his biographers, urged the Maryland General Assembly to change course from correct but cold principle to reasoned persuasion. Taking Hanson's lead, the Assembly adopted the well-reasoned Declaration of Maryland and appointed Hanson as Delegate to the Second Continental Congress. Soon after his 1780 arrival, the Congress began referring to Maryland's new approach as the Hanson Plan.

Within eight months, a despairing George Washington saw his old ally Hanson sever the Gordian Knot, wheel twelve opposing states around, and finally charter a government unanimously. On March 1, 1781, Hanson famously added his signature, the last, to the Articles of Confederation finally authorizing the original government to be brought forth that November with his election as its first president.

Twice at critical junctures John Hanson had kept his nation whole. One longs for such a unifier in the Congress today.

Best of the Best: The Icons of His Era Elect Hanson President

Appeared January 22, 2012

By 1781, the United States had evolved through each step but one to establish nationhood. In 1776 the colonies had declared independence, in 1777 the Articles of Confederation were drafted prescribing a government, by 1781 the Hanson Plan had assured unified nationhood by resolving the western lands impasse, and that March all thirteen states had ratified the Articles authorizing a government to be created that fall. All that remained for full nationhood letting the United States take her place on the world stage was to launch the original government that November, the timing prescribed by the Articles.

To whom among them should the Second Continental Congress delegates look as most likely to successfully deliver the new government, fulfilling nationhood at this most critical juncture? While the eight other presidents of the first government and all forty-four under the later Constitution through 2012 inherited a functioning government upon taking office, the nation's first president would inherit but a blank slate and have to create anew the entire government structure, trappings and performance.

For their first president, the delegates had a dazzling choice of some of the most competent Americans the nation ever saw: the heroic Washington who had just delivered military victory, the intellectually dazzling Jefferson who had penned a nation-founding canon such as the world had never seen, John Hancock who had presided longest over the outgoing Second Continental Congress, the brilliant John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin, mentor to them all, to name but a few.

Leading up to launching the government, critical assessments of these men and others frothed

as the delegates deliberated the pivotal choice of their nation's first president. On November 5, 1781, the delegates including the American icons mentioned — the best the new nation had to offer — understood at that golden hour that they must choose the very best among them. In that all-important convening in Independence Hall, as the last star finally aligned for completion of national birth, all eyes fell on Maryland's John Hanson, best of the best in the minds of some of the most astute Americans who ever lived.

Ever so fortunately, fate has favored the nation with her best presidents at the most perilous junctures: Washington at the founding of the second government, Lincoln as the nation cleaved apart, the second Roosevelt as the nation's very wellbeing crumpled. It isn't difficult to make the case that the first time providence delivered an especially able president was when the nation was a newborn facing the imperative of electing a first president who dare not miss.

What was it that stirred the delegates to look to Hanson as their very best over many who have since entered the pantheon of American greats?

What the delegates of the Second Continental Congress saw before his arrival there in 1780 were Hanson's having convinced Maryland to subscribe to the Declaration of Independence, four years later his advancing Maryland's Hanson Plan to solve the western lands impasse, and his already having sacrificed a son and much of his family wealth to independence.

After his arrival at the Congress, Hanson's leadership became visible first-hand, especially his solving the nation-breaking western lands riddle. As the delegates had seen peering into this abyss, united nationhood hung in the balance as Hanson, where no other had succeeded, within eight months bridged the gap between states with and without large trans-Appalachian land grants. And as they knew, weeks before his election Hanson had lost another son to the war and his eldest daughter.

The delegates also witnessed the astuteness with which Hanson, using his hallmark diplomacy, marshaled his Second Continental Congress colleagues' support, convincing states with sharply disparate interests to subordinate themselves for the sake of national unity. Hanson's biographers uniformly describe him as a modest man possessed of natural ability at working constructively with others, organizational brilliance, leadership acumen and an unerring devotion to national unity. On the two hundredth anniversary of Hanson's inauguration as president, Maryland's United States Senator Charles Mathias would say in a Frederick ceremony, "John Hanson, confronted with problems common to his day and ours, handled those problems in a manner uncommon to his day and ours. Such is the stuff of leadership. Events pass; people pass. Leadership endures."

Embracing him as Hanson the Unifier, the delegates took his temperament, constructive instincts, record and devotion as timely providence.

And so, on November 5, 1781, as its first action, the new government, including some of the greatest Americans ever to serve, unanimously elected John Hanson their nation's first president, the highest position in the land, as nationhood was thus completed and the Second Continental Congress passed into history. John Hanson became the first American recognized at home or abroad as head of state of the United States. His title was President of the United States in Congress Assembled, the same worn by his eight successors. As we shall see, he grandly succeeded.

Onto the World Stage: The Hanson Presidential Administration

Appeared February 26, 2012

On November 5, 1781, upon John Hanson's election as president, the sweeping concept of the United States of America ended its pregnancy, finally became whole with a government, vaulted from grand theory to life, and took its celebrated place in history.

As its second order of business that day, the new government legislated that, "The President takes precedent of all and every person in the United States; next to him, members of Congress have precedence; then the Commander-in-Chief of the Army; then the great officers of Congress."

While all other presidents of the first government and those under the Constitution inherited a functioning government, Hanson and his cabinet had to fashion one anew from whole cloth.

Cabinet positions were created in the order of Foreign Affairs, Finance and War, today's Secretaries of State, Treasury and Defense, the hierarchy followed in modern protocol and presidential succession.

Weeks into Hanson's administration, the nation's first central bank, the Bank of North America, predecessor to today's Federal Reserve, began operation near Independence Hall.

Hanson's appointments of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, John Jay and Henry Laurens as the American team sent to Paris to negotiate peace with Britain were singularly instrumental in what has been reckoned "the greatest victory in the annals of American diplomacy," a negotiating triumph doubling the area of the United States. With Hanson's sure-handed guidance and dazzling appointments, brilliant is not too strong a term describing his administration's foreign affairs performance. Few administrations since can claim diplomatic advances matching those of Hanson's presidency, all not in a four-year span of modern administrations but in a single year.

John Hanson's administration also launched a number of lasting national customs.

First of these was that Americans had in Jane Contee Hanson their first First Lady, the title originated in the United States and now used widely elsewhere. Into the mid-nineteenth century, the title had not come into usage, Martha Washington, for example, having been referred to as Lady Washington. Nevertheless, the nation has always had at the side of its president a woman serving as the nation's hostess and acknowledged as such in her own time. Titled or not, capitalized or not, all of these women from Jane Hanson through Michelle Obama served their nation as its First Ladies.

An executive mansion and presidential portraits were established during the Hanson administration. Days following Hanson's inauguration, Congress provided a nearby mansion, household staff, coach, horses and household expenses to the Hanson family. During 1782, the president sat for his Charles Willson Peale portrait, now in the Independence Hall collection.

Two other enduring customs from the nation's first presidential administration are official annual observances of the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving established by Hanson presidential decrees.

One must wonder how history would have reckoned the presidents of the original government and the early presidents of the second government had they switched places. Was it sheer charisma, weight of accomplishment or executive brilliance which have emblazoned Washington, Adams, Jefferson and Madison in their nation's memory, or were they more able to make their marks by serving four or eight years with far greater authority under a strengthened government charter, the Constitution? Excepting Adams who served a single term, these presidents each served a year longer than did all nine first-government presidents together. If these four had served as the first presidents of the original weaker government, each with a single twelve-month term, would they still have been able to attain their lasting recognition or would they, too, have been relegated to the dusty back shelves of history as those who first served have been?

Conversely, what records would the first government's presidents have compiled if instead they had served under the Constitution's greater presidential authority and had four or eight times longer in office to make their marks? They would have been able to accomplish far more, been recorded far more fondly by history, and show up in any list of presidents since. Americans would know the nine by name. If Washington and Hanson had served in opposite governments, which

of them would be better known today? These contrasts make clear why the second government's early presidents wear the deserved mantle of Founding Fathers but their presidential predecessors remain uncounted.

I queried twenty historians to divine the inattention to the indispensible national evolution of the 1780s, but these astute correspondents could find no particular reason for the neglect, or as one put it, "the glaring gap in historians' treatment of the 1780s." None could report any major book explicitly and comprehensively devoted to the decade.

What one concludes on the historical hollow of the1780s is that explanations offered are only symptoms of the root neglect which is sheer neglect itself. It is high time for a definitive political history of what John Quincy Adams correctly discerned as the critical decade of the United States.

Vanished: Discovering Hanson's Grave and Reilluminating Him Today

Appeared March 25, 2012

Robbed tomb and mass grave: no story of an American First Couple approaches John and Jane Hanson's except perhaps the Lincolns' assassination and asylum.

When John Hanson returned home to Frederick after his presidency, he longingly re-engaged in his roles of family man, merchant, planter and now past president but had a difficult winter going into 1783. Expectations put on former presidents take time and vigor, and called on the first past president to spend considerable energy answering correspondence, receiving visitors and advising on matters of state. Hanson rallied enough that summer to receive accolades in Annapolis, his state's capital, but by fall slipped into a last decline.

While visiting Oxon Hill Manor, his nephew's Prince George's County estate, President Hanson took ill a final time, lingering with much discomfort. On November 22, 1783, the American who had twice been indispensable in assuring nationhood, to whom the young nation had turned to first lead it, who had sacrificed so much in bringing forth his country, died at 68. Had he lived five days more, he would have celebrated Thanksgiving which by his quill had become official one year earlier.

Then John Hanson vanished.

In one of the most astounding turns in American history, Hanson's gravesite became forgotten, rediscovered, forgotten again, and found once more in 2011 in researching *Remembering John Hanson* by which time it and Hanson's body had vanished in the most tragic manner.

In 1984, Oxon Hill Manor was purchased for development by Lewis Enterprises which in 1986 commissioned surveys that included the crypt where John Hanson had been interred. A 1985 State survey had found the crypt and its vault intact and sealed, but by 1987 the archeologist of the Lewis survey states, "About 70 to 80 feet below the site of the plantation house was a deteriorating brick vaulted structure built into the hillside" which the archeologist reported "was the 1783 burial place of John Hanson" and "*had been robbed*."

Sometime between 1985 and 1987, John Hanson had disappeared.

Then, so did the crypt and vault. A 1993 photograph shows them having mysteriously vanished, graded into a parking lot. From 1984 to1993, Lewis Enterprises owned the property. Later, Lewis's development project went broke and the property was sold to the Peterson Companies, developer of the immense National Harbor. Efforts to track down James Lewis, head of Lewis Enterprises, have proved futile.

Compounding the astonishing historical misfortunes obscuring John Hanson's legacy, Jane Hanson would also vanish after death.

In 1913, 356 individuals were reinterred from Frederick's old Episcopal graveyard to nearby Mount Olivet Cemetery when the church sold the graveyard for development. Mount Olivet's well-kept records indicate that how a body from the Episcopal graveyard was reinterred depended on whether or not it had a legible gravestone from the old cemetery. The 70 with legible gravestones were reburied individually, identified by their gravestones. Those without legible gravestones and others including Jane Hanson who had been buried in family crypts with unmarked coffins were reinterred together in a mass grave. These 286 unidentified souls rest in one large burial vault beneath an unmarked grassy knoll at Mount Olivet.

In 2009, a movement arose to revive national awareness of John Hanson, his indispensable roles in the Revolution, and the accomplishments of his presidency. Initiatives include *Remembering John Hanson,* and John Hanson Memorial Association programs including the John Hanson National Memorial, correction of Internet inaccuracies on Hanson, and a permanent public education campaign reacquainting Americans with their first president.

If any place should rekindle the memory of John Hanson, it would be Frederick, Maryland, to which Hanson moved late in life and refashioned himself for the sake of nationhood. Adopting one another, Hanson and Frederick forged a political bond that propelled both to the historical forefront of the nation's founding.

Chosen for the Memorial site was the Frederick County Courthouse courtyard adjacent to the site of John Hanson House, tragically razed in 1981. In 2011, the Memorial was donated by the John Hanson Memorial Association to Frederick County and serves as the place where Americans may finally honor their first president. A memorial for Jane at her grave is in the works.

An observation by his son, Maryland Chancellor Alexander Contee Hanson, is John Hanson's fitting epitaph. As Alexander wrote in *The Laws of Maryland* and later delivered as a toast honoring his father,

> "During the whole memorable interval between the fall of the old and the institution of the new form of government, there appeared to exist amongst us such a fund of public virtue as has scarcely a parallel in the annals of the world."

Public virtue indeed.

The historical record is clear: John Hanson was chosen to first lead the country as it consummated nationhood, rests in the very top rank of deliverers of the United States, and did as much as any giving birth to a nation which ever since has been emulated the world over for its ideals of independence and democracy.

May his nation's memory of him now and forever be reawakened.

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